



Welsh Grand Committee

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Some Members representing Welsh constituencies called for a meeting of the Welsh Grand Committee in order to discuss the impact on Wales of the *Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill 2010*. The Secretary of State, Cheryl Gillan, declined.

This Note gives a very brief account of the business of the Committee and a list of its previous meetings.

Further information on the bill is available in SN/5697/PCC, [Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill 2010: progress of the Bill](#), 27 October 2010, and Research Paper 10/55, [The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill \[Bill 63 of 2010-11\]](#), 1 September 2010.

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1 The Territorial Grand Committees

The Welsh Grand Committee is one of three currently operating. The others cover Scotland and Northern Ireland; there were short-lived English regional committees towards the end of the 2005 Parliament.

The composition and business of these committees is covered by [Standing Orders](#). SO 102 – 108 cover the Welsh Grand Committee.

1.1 Welsh Grand Committee

The Welsh Grand Committee was established in the 1959-60 session, and held its first meeting on 11 May 1960. It includes all Members representing Welsh constituencies, plus a maximum of five other Members nominated by the Committee of Selection. The quorum is seven, including the Chairman.

The Committee usually meets at Westminster, but since the early 1990s it has also had the capacity to meet in Wales, and it has done so a number of times.

2 List of meetings

The following list is derived from Sessional Returns, Standing Committee debates, and Sessional Information Digests, plus PIMS for the current session. The more recent entries have been cross-checked with PQs and the parliamentary [website](#). The subject matter is for the main debates; the Committee may also put questions and hear statements from Ministers.

<u>Session</u>	<u>No. of matters</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1959-60 ¹	1	Report on Developments and Government Action in Wales and Monmouthshire, 1959
1960-61	2	Report on Developments etc (as above), 1959 Report on Developments etc (as above), 1960
1961-62	2	Broadcasting, including TV, in Wales and Monmouthshire Report on Developments, etc (as above), 1961
1962-63	4	Education in Wales and Monmouthshire Industry and Employment in Wales and Monmouthshire Transport in Wales and Monmouthshire

¹ The first meeting of the Welsh Grand Committee was on 11 May 1960.

		Tourism in Wales and Monmouthshire
1963-64	3	Regional Development in Wales and Monmouthshire Health Services in Wales and Monmouthshire Rural Development in Wales and Monmouthshire
1964-65	4	Functions of the Secretary of State for Wales and Constitutional Changes in Wales and Monmouthshire Mid-Wales Development and Depopulation Problems Agriculture in Wales and Monmouthshire Iron Ore Ports and Industrial Development in Wales and Monmouthshire
1965-66	1	Report of the Committee on the Legal Status of the Welsh Language
1966-67	4	Industry in Wales and Monmouthshire Education in Wales and Monmouthshire Rural Development in Wales and Monmouthshire Roads and Communications in Wales and Monmouthshire
1967-68	2	Agriculture in Wales and Monmouthshire Primary Education in Wales and Monmouthshire
1968-69	2	Statement of Government Proposals for Reorganising Local Government in Wales Health and Welfare Services in Wales
1969-70	3	Housing in Wales and Monmouthshire The Welsh Language

White Paper on Local Government Reorganisation in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire

1970-71	6	Effects of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Statement on Public Expenditure on the Welsh Economy Local Government Finance in Wales and Monmouthshire South Wales Ports Economic Situation in Wales and Monmouthshire Reform of Local Government in Wales National Health Service Reorganisation in Wales
1971-72	4	Communications in Wales The Coal and Steel Industries in Wales Housing in Wales Radio and Television in Wales
1972-73	5	National Health Service Reorganisation in Wales Bilingual Traffic Signs in Wales Unemployment in Wales The Handicapped in Wales Steel Industry in Wales
1973-74	1	Education
1974	2	Agriculture and Rural Affairs Housing
1974-75	5	Education Energy Industries Economy

		Industry and Employment
		Environment
1975-76	4	Development of Rural Wales (Lords) Bill
		Economy in Wales
		Housing in Wales
		Effect of Devolution in Wales
1976-77	3	Health Services in Wales
		Transport and Communications in Wales
		Small Businesses in Wales
1977-78	3	Arts in Wales
		Welsh Development Agency
		Youth Unemployment in Wales
1978-79	1	The Welsh Economy
1979-80	6	The Welsh Economy
		Report of the Price Commission, "Welsh Water Authority - Water, Sewerage and Environmental Services"
		The Economy of Wales
		Health and Social Services in Wales
		Effect of the Budget on Wales
		The Welsh Language
1980-81	5	Housing in Wales
		The Consequences of the Budget and the Government's Economic Policies in Wales
		Reorganisation of the National Health Service in Wales

		Rural Affairs in Wales Welsh Development Agency
1981-82	5	Housing in Wales Ports in Wales Education and Training in Wales Annual Report of the Wales Tourist Board for the year ended 31 March 1982 Regional Policy in Wales
1982-83	2	<i>Conwy Tunnel (Supplementary Powers) Bill</i> National Health Service in Wales
1983-84	5	National Health Service in Wales Transport in Wales Water in Wales Housing and Urban Development in Wales Rural Affairs in Wales
1984-85	5	Transport in Wales Regional Policy as it affects Wales The Budget and the Government's Economic Policies in Wales The Welsh Economy Education and Training in Wales
1985-86	3	The Elderly in Wales Roads Programme and Transport Infrastructure in Wales Welsh Development Agency

1986-87	2	<p>The Queen's Speech and its effect on Wales</p> <p>Economic, Industrial and Commercial Development in Wales</p> <p>The National Health Service in Wales and Education and Training for Employment in Wales</p> <p>The Effect of Government Legislation on the people of Wales</p>
1988-89	4	<p>The Effects of the Queen's Speech on the People of Wales</p> <p>Housing in Wales</p> <p>The first Year of the Valleys Programme</p> <p>The National Health Service in Wales</p>
1989-90	3	<p>Future Economy and Environment of North Wales</p> <p>Welsh Office Policies and Provision for 1992</p> <p>Inward Investment to Wales</p>
1990-91	3	<p>Education and Training in Wales</p> <p>Rural Wales</p> <p>The Welsh Economy</p>
1991-92	2	<p>The Urban and Rural Regeneration of Wales</p> <p>Education in Wales</p>
1992-93	3	<p>Unemployment in Wales</p> <p>The Structure of Government in Wales</p> <p>Local Government in Wales</p>
1993-94	3	<p>Implications of the Budget for Wales</p> <p>Education Standards in Wales</p>

		Health and Health Care in Wales
1994-95	2	The Welsh Economy Health Care in Wales
1995-96	2	Implications of the Gracious Speech Implications of the Budget for Wales
1996-97	1	Implications of the Budget for Wales
1997-98	5	The Government's Programme for Wales North Wales and the Government's Proposals for a Welsh Assembly Government Expenditure in Wales 1998-99 The Rural Economy in Wales The New Economic Agenda for Wales
1998-99	2	Government Expenditure in Wales 1999-2000 to 2001-2002 Transport Policy in Wales
1999-00	5	Government's Legislative Programme and the Chancellor's Pre-Budget Report Budget Statement and its Implications for Wales Welsh Economy Social Exclusion in Wales Comprehensive Spending Review
2000-01	3	Government's Legislative Programme and the Chancellor's Pre-Budget Statement as they relate to Wales

		Building Safer Communities in Wales
		Budget Statement and its Implications for Wales
2001-02	4	Draft <i>National Health Service (Wales) Bill</i>
		Government's Legislative Programme as it relates to Wales
		Pre-Budget Statement and its Implications for Wales
		Budget Statement and its Implications for Wales
2002-03	4	Draft <i>Public Audit (Wales) Bill</i>
		Government's Legislative Programme as Outlined in the Queen's Speech as it relates to Wales
		Government's Pre-Budget Report as it relates to Wales
		Economy in Wales
2003-04	4	Draft <i>Transport (Wales) Bill</i>
		Government's Legislative Programme as outlined in the Queen's Speech as it relates to Wales and Public Expenditure in Wales
		Budget Statement and its Implications for Wales
		Report of the Richard Commission
2004-05	1	Government's Legislative Programme as outlined in the Queen's Speech as it relates to Wales and Public Expenditure in Wales
2005-06	2	Government's Legislative Programme as it relates to Wales
		Budget Statement and its Implications for Wales
2006-07	1	Government's Legislative Programme as it relates to Wales and public expenditure in Wales

2007-08	3	<p>Government's Legislative Programme as it relates to Wales and public expenditure in Wales</p> <p>Budget Statement and its Implications for Wales</p> <p>Future of Energy in Wales</p>
2008-09	4	<p>Public Expenditure in Wales</p> <p>Legislative Programme (Wales)</p> <p>Budget Statement and its Implications for Wales</p> <p><i>National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Welsh Language) Order 2009</i></p>
2009-10	1	<p>Government's Legislative Programme as outlined in the Queen's Speech as it relates to Wales and Government expenditure in Wales</p>
2010-12	1	<p>Government's Legislative Programme as outlined in the Queen's Speech and the Budget Statement as they relate to Wales</p>

2.1 Business

The business of the Welsh Grand Committee may include the following:²

- Questions to Wales Office Ministers
- Short debates on matters relating to Wales, running to 30 minutes in total
- Bills, typically relating solely or mainly to Wales, in lieu of debate in the House on second reading
- Ministerial statements
- Matters relating exclusively to Wales, which are the main part of the discussions in the Committee
- Half-hour adjournment debate

When considering Welsh matters the Committee may not express an opinion: it merely reports to the House that it has considered that matter. Where bills are referred to it, the Committee must recommend whether the bill should be read a second time.³

² *Erskine May*, 23rd ed, 2004, pp830-31.

³ *Parliament: Functions, Practice and Procedures*, J Griffith & M Ryle, 1989, p274.

3 The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill 2010

A number of Welsh Members requested a debate in the Welsh Grand Committee on certain clauses of the *Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill 2010*, which would have the effect of reducing the number of Welsh constituencies at Westminster. The Secretary of State, Cheryl Gillan, declined.

This gave rise to controversy, as expressed, for instance, by Owen Smith during Business Questions:⁴

May I return to the important constitutional matters in the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill that there has not been time to debate on the Floor of the House? One of them relates to Wales. The main clauses relating to Wales were debated yesterday, but we did not get to the critical clause—clause 11, which relates specifically to the National Assembly—although the Secretary of State for Wales stated in a letter to all Welsh Members that that clause would be debated. Indeed, that was the very reason why she denied our request for a sitting of the Welsh Grand Committee. May I therefore ask the Leader of the House to make urgent representations to the Secretary of State for Wales on the pressing need to reinstate the Welsh Grand Committee, so that we can debate that critical matter for the people of Wales?

Sir George Young replied:⁵

I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, but I cannot accede to that request. When I came into the Chamber to listen to the debate yesterday, Wales was being discussed most of the time, so the notion that it has not been possible to discuss matters relating to Wales simply does not stand up. There will be opportunities on Report to debate the parts of the Bill that were not reached in Committee—but I have to say that if hon. Members want to reach the necessary clauses they should exert some self-discipline, and not speak interminably on certain matters so that key parts of the Bill are not reached.

⁴ HC Deb 21 October 2010, c1137.

⁵ Ibid.